

# NEWS

## ***CED Thompson to the Rescue!***

**S** Stanton Thompson, Lafayette County, Mo., CED claims he's not a hero, but three 10-year-old boys say different. Without regard for his own safety, he leaped into action upon hearing that two of the boys were trapped in a storm sewer.

In September, the boys were playing in a ditch of ankle-deep rainwater runoff when they decided to explore a 6-foot diameter tube. The water there was deep and fast, and the boys lost their footing and slid down the tube into a swift-running underground storm sewer. One boy, Kendall Holsten, was able to get to safety, but the other two, Gregory Kueck and Kendall's brother Cameron, couldn't get free. They held onto heavy-duty wires in the concrete sewer while Kendall ran for help. He found it in Thompson who was helping out at a nearby restaurant. As others in the restaurant phoned rescue personnel, Thompson immediately ran to the storm drain. He saw the frantic boys 60 feet inside the tunnel, hanging on as their legs dangled in the current. Gregory started hollering that he couldn't hang on much longer. Thompson also feared the boys were in danger of hypothermia, so he decided to go in after them.

The emergency crew arrived within minutes. Their initial strategy was to float tethered life jackets to the boys, but Thompson knew the boys couldn't put the jackets on without letting go and being swept away. So he threw on a life jacket and slipped through the grate into the drain. He was tossed about in the violent churning of the tunnel's opening, but somehow regained his footing, tethered himself to the firemen's line, and made his



*Photo by Jeff Kirchhoff, "The Concordian" Newspaper*

Stanton Thompson visits with (from left) Kendall Holsten, Gregory Kueck, and Cameron Holsten for the first time since Thompson helped rescue Gregory and Cameron. Thompson presented the boys with Navy hats and, in return, he received pictures of the boys.

way through the tunnel to the boys. One after the other, Thompson managed get a life jacket around each boy and push them through the turbulent water at the drain's opening close enough to the grate for the firemen outside to grab them. The rescue team then pulled Thompson safely out.

After it was all over, the firemen told Thompson that the concrete portion of the tunnel ended a little further down and dropped lower into a tube. They said if the boys and Thompson had been carried downstream, they probably would not have survived. One of the rescue workers was amazed how strong the current was when he stepped into the water, saying the force almost pulled one of his boots

off. "As far as I'm concerned," the worker said, "God saved their lives; we just rescued them." The boys were not injured, except for a few scrapes and bruises, and Thompson got a bruised leg and a cold. "And my beeper has had it," Thompson said.

Thompson said he never feared for his own life because he was too busy concentrating on the boys' safety. It could be that his training in the U.S. Navy had something to do with it — he's a Reserve Rear Admiral and served in Vietnam and Desert Storm. "In the Navy, you don't think about what could happen. You just think about what you have to do next," he explained.

## ADMINISTRATOR'S COLUMN

### Meet Your Associate Administrators

**A**s we start this new year, we begin with some changes in the FSA management team. Jim Kearney and Parks Shackelford have moved into new positions. Jim is now the Associate Administrator for Operations and Management and Parks is the new Associate Administrator for Programs. Some of you may be familiar with either or both of them while I am sure others are not. I asked each of them to tell you a little about themselves.

#### Jim Kearney



*Born and reared on a farm in Edgecombe County, North Carolina, I knew at an early age that I wanted to help improve rural*

*communities and the lives of farmers. Toward this goal, I graduated from North Carolina A & T State University in 1965 with a B.S. degree in Agricultural Eco-*

*nomics. This degree opened the door to my first position with USDA as an FmHA Assistant County Supervisor in North Carolina.*

*My love for the land and people of rural North Carolina propelled me into higher levels of service with USDA, as I moved on to become the State Director for Rural Development, my position from 1993 through 1998. As State Director, I led North Carolina's RD through a major reorganization and downsizing while expanding its position as one of the top states in the Nation for its service to rural citizens. Along the way, I also served a total of 25 years with the U.S. Army, the North Carolina National Guard, and am currently a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve.*

*I credit my parents with helping me learn the value of living close to the land and the people who live outside corporate city limits. My love of the great outdoors draws me to my favorite pastimes — hunting and fishing.*

*During my many years of service with USDA in North Carolina, I led the way toward improving communication among my co-workers, including encouraging better understanding among different races and backgrounds. I came to the National Office in February 1998 as a Special Assistant to Administrator Kelly, where I dedicated myself to improved farm credit program outreach. I also worked to implement the recommendations of the National Commission on Small Farms.*

*As Associate Administrator for Operations and Management, I will continue to realize my goal of fairness and equality for all — customers and employees alike. My role as overseer of FSA's state operations and administrative management represents a giant step in my personal and professional journey to serve rural America.*

*I am very pleased to join a workforce with a profound zeal to serve and a tremendous capacity to deliver. I want to help lead and direct this enormous human energy to meet the challenges that face us all. I want us to remain ready and able to serve our farmers and ranchers, helping them to be viable, to grow and to prosper.*

#### Parks Shackelford



*I grew up on a cotton, rice, and peanut family farm in Jones, Louisiana. My older brother served as a member of the county committee for*

*years. This gave me first-hand knowledge of how the county committee works. I understand and strongly support the county committee system for program administration.*

*I attended Woodberry Forest School and graduated in 1979. In 1983, I graduated with a B.A. degree in Latin American studies from Tulane University. I spent the following year in Costa Rica, where I studied Spanish and participated in a biology field research project.*

#### FSA News

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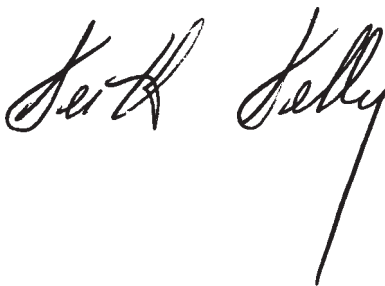
*I enjoy the outdoors and am an avid hunter and fisherman. Those of you who have visited my Washington office know that the elk and deer mounts on my walls always prompt a lot of conversation.*

*As for my professional career, I worked in Congress for many years, writing a lot of the laws our Agency now implements. I think I bring a keen insight of the Congressional intent of farm legislation. I have a strong interest and belief in farm programs. I feel they should be administered in ways that are consistent with the program intent, even when that may not be the most popular option.*

*A lot of you know that I served as Assistant Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs for a number of years. I worked very closely with Richard Newman. Richard had a clear understanding of the programs implemented in the field, while I understood the policy perspective and the workings of Washington. Together we tried to bring a common sense approach to implementing programs. This is important to me. Where the law allows flexibility, I like to rely on the field for input on what works and what doesn't. I hope the recently implemented Livestock Assistance Program will be a successful example of this goal.*

*I think FSA has a bright future. Yes, we have gone through tremendous change in recent years, and we will have to continue to modernize. The agricultural economy is cyclical, with good years and bad. We have to be there to help farmers and ranchers when times are tough. This requires our Agency to remain flexible to meet the challenges that lie ahead. I look forward to those challenges and hope that together we can tackle whatever we encounter.*

I know that working with Jim and Parks in their new positions will be gratifying. With their special talents in communications, outreach, and program expertise, they are part of a new, stronger management team that I will depend on to help me lead FSA to an even brighter future.



#### FOOD FACT:

An estimated 44% of American adults go on a diet each year. Have you made your New Year's resolution yet?

— Source:  
Only Gourmet



## Schumacher Gets Shining Light Award



August Schumacher

**U**nder Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services August Schumacher was one of four chosen to receive "Cooking Light" magazine's first annual Shining Light award. The magazine recognized him for launching a pilot program to help low-income women in Massachusetts buy fresh produce at farmers markets.

In 1980, Schumacher was talking with a woman on food stamps who had no grocery money left for fresh fruits and vegetables. In 1985, when he became Massachusetts' Commissioner of Food and Agriculture, the incident was still in his mind. He helped add a voucher system to the state's WIC food stamp program to be used for buying fresh produce at farmers markets. Four other states quickly followed suit. Schumacher testified before Congress on starting a national program, which became reality in 1992 when Congress formally established the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program. The program now serves more than a million people in 36 states.

USDA is working on having this program implemented in all states by 2002. The Nation's poor have made nutritional gains as a result, eating more fresh fruits and vegetables year-round.



## FSA — Hard at Work for Others

**A**s part of Secretary Glickman's Harvest Celebration of Success, FSA helped collect 1,540,000 pounds of food nationwide. On November 18, 75 representatives of FSA, NRCS, and RD volunteered at the Community Food Site of the Capital Area Food Bank in Washington, D.C. Together, they sorted over 10,000 pounds of food in less than 2 hours.

Bob Soukup, one of the volunteers, said of his experience, "It was a great learning experience to see the dedication of people who work at the Food Bank." Chris Niedermeyer said, "Being involved in this activity to help less fortunate members of our community was great fun and very gratifying."



Volunteers listen as Food Bank Volunteer Coordinator Mark Agee gives instructions.

*Photos by Eric Parsons*



Sorting donated food items are: Diane Sharp, Director, Production, Emergencies, & Compliance Division; Elnora Dooms, Assistant Deputy Administrator for Program Delivery and Field Operations; Carolyn Cooksie, Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs; and Chris Niedermeyer, Assistant to the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs.



Robert Springer, Executive Director for State Operations; Administrator Kelly; and Mark Agee.

## FSA's Program Dispute Resolution Training a Big Success

by Tal Day, Appeals and Litigation Group

**T**he Appeals and Litigation Group (ALG) recently conducted program dispute resolution training in Atlanta, Chicago, and San Diego for state office staffs around the country. A comprehensive overview of FSA's methods for resolving disputes with FSA program participants, the training gained a highly favorable response from state office attendees, who will pass on what they learned to district and county employees.

A number of SEDs and State Commissioners of Agriculture attended, along with approximately 75 others at each of the first two sessions. As word of the usefulness of the Atlanta and Chicago sessions spread, attendance in San Diego increased to 125. Administrator Kelly also attended the San Diego session.

The training focused on handling program disputes through the Agency's informal appeals process and mediation, as well as appeals to the National Appeals Division (NAD). ALG emphasized that the goal of the dispute resolution process is to reach the right decision, which may not necessarily correspond to the original decision.

The training highlighted preparation for and conduct of hearings, and included mediation role playing sessions with help from experts at the Coalition of Agricultural Mediation Programs. The training also included segments on interactions with the Office of Inspector General, coordination with the Office of the General Counsel, and processing of appeals under the Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts. The Director of NAD spoke at two of the sessions to give an overview of NAD's role.

Judging from the participants' feedback, the training was highly effective. Attendees said that they left with a broader understanding of FSA's informal appeals process, the responsibilities of NAD, and the options for resolving program disputes. They said the use of role playing scenarios helped reinforce their understanding of the mediation process. The training as a whole "clarified guidelines" and could be "immediately applied" in their jobs, they said. Training participants also appreciated the opportunity to meet face-to-face with ALG staff and specialists from other states.

Administrator Kelly endorsed the training when he addressed the San Diego audience. "This training is right in line with my vision for the Agency. I commend all of you for making every effort to resolve disputes without litigation. We owe it to our customers to serve them as equitably as possible."

Following the success of the first three sessions, a fourth session has been scheduled for National Office employees on January 20-21 in Washington D.C. Employees interested in attending should contact Jack Welch at (202) 720-7743.



Mediation role playing at the Chicago session.

Photo by Amy Jones



### FOOD FACT:

Eskimos eat more fat than any other people in the world, but heart diseases are rare among them. This is because the fats in their traditional diet of fish and seal blubber are unsaturated.

— Source: *The Food Files*

## Missouri County Office Leads the Way!

by Christine Zeigler, Communications Coordinator, Missouri State Office

**A** positive attitude is key to employees in Buchanan County, Mo.'s Service Center. Their optimism in the face of change helped earn them an award from USDA's National Food and Agriculture Council (FAC) for their work as a Leading Edge office.

In 1996, the FAC team chose a handful of USDA offices across the country to be Leading Edge offices. These offices took the forefront in USDA Service Center implementation, becoming prototypes for improved customer service across FSA, NRCS, and RD agency lines. They fulfilled service center goals of one-stop, quality customer service delivery, cost reduction, and agency partnerships long before the National Office offered training in these areas. The offices achieved seamless program execution while consolidating administrative practices to reduce waste. They also identified



Buchanan County employees and Missouri SED Brad Epperson accept the Leading Edge office award.

Pictured left to right: Rodney Saunders, NRCS District Conservationist and Team Leader; Ron Harris, NRCS Area Conservationist; Paula Price, NRCS Area Administrative Coordinator; SED Epperson; Craig Everly, FSA Buchanan County CED; Paul Wilmes, RD Area Manager.

barriers to collocation that are now being addressed nationally.

Buchanan County employees shared supplies and equipment and implemented many other efficiencies that became standard throughout the country. "Something as basic as having one person order supplies and another collect and distribute mail for the entire Service Center wipes out so much duplication," says Craig Everly, FSA's Buchanan County CED. "We also get the advantage of working

closer with RD and NRCS employees — it helps us better understand their programs and responsibilities."

It's this kind of enthusiasm — embracing rather than resisting positive changes — that earned Buchanan County employees recognition from the FAC. The Leading Edge Service Center plaque hanging in their lobby area will serve to remind customers and employees alike that this is a very special office.

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## FSA Employees Attend Hispanic Managers Roundtable

by Lisa Brown, Senior Marketing Specialist, Commodity Operations Staff

**T**wo Commodity Operations Staff employees recently participated in a three-day event to advance professional career opportunities for Hispanics. In September, Lisa Brown and Dean Jensen attended the "Hispanic Business Magazine" CEO Roundtable in Washington D.C. They were joined by over 400 CEOs and key executives from Hispanic-owned businesses who discussed strategies on promoting a greater Hispanic presence in the Federal Government, small businesses, and the professional job market.

The roundtable included workshops on Federal and corporate procurement opportunities, electronic commerce and marketing for small businesses, and exporting and investing in Latin America. Roundtable participants also

previewed the premier issue of the "Hispanic Business Federal Resource Guide," a source of information on Federal recruitment, procurement, contracting, and grants. As part of Commodity Operations' outreach efforts, the staff placed a full-page contracting advertisement in the guide to give Hispanics an idea of contracting and procurement opportunities available through FSA. During a roundtable reception, Brown and Jensen had the chance to discuss Hispanic-owned business outreach efforts with attendee Representative Ruben Hinojosa, D-Texas.

Brown says, "The event was really worthwhile. Since in my job I provide outreach services to underrepresented groups, this was a great opportunity to meet with Hispanic business people. It

shows them that we are serious in our efforts to increase the participation of small, underserved, and women-owned businesses in USDA contracting activities."



Photo by Jeff Watts, Infinite Photo and Imaging

Pictured left to right: Dean Jensen and Lisa Brown, Commodity Operations Staff; Jesus Chavarria, Editor/Publisher, "Hispanic Business Magazine"; Anthony Carone, Chief Operating Officer, U.S. Helicopters



## A New Face in the Cattle Business

A few hundred feet of fencing and two steers mean a lot to a 13-year-old. With them, Justin Dodge of Aledo, Ill. comes closer to some day being a farmer. A loan from FSA's Rural Youth Loan Program has helped him get this far.

Laura Abney, FSA Agriculture Loan Manager in Cambridge, Ill., worked with Dodge to develop a Farm and Home Plan that projects income, expenses (purchasing cattle, fencing, and feed), and ways to cut costs. To save money, Dodge went around his father's farm picking up corn missed by the combine. This, and a youth discount from a fencing supply retailer, helped Dodge pull together enough money to build his fence. His parents helped him put up the fence and start caring for his two steers.

Dodge agrees that his cattle are a lot of work, yet worth the effort. He says he doesn't expect to make too much money because cattle prices are low right now. He just wants the experience of caring for his own stock, and he realizes everybody has to start somewhere.

"Justin is a responsible young man and he's learning a valuable experience. He's very proud of his cows, and we're very proud of him," Abney says.

"This program is one of the things that makes my job so worthwhile," Abney says. "Too often, FSA is thought of as the lender of last resort. But now we're looked at as the lender of first opportunity."



Justin Dodge tends to one of his steers.

Photo by Pam Berenger,  
"The Dispatch/The Rock Island Argus," Moline, Ill.

## Richard Newman Retires

Richard O. Newman, Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs, retired at the end of December after more than 38 years with the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and FSA.

Born on a farm in Stamford, Texas, Richard reached his position the hard way, starting as a crop reporter for ASCS in 1960 while still a student. After he graduated from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, he worked as a County Executive Director for 10 years and a District Director for 18 years. In September 1994, he was appointed Director of FSA's Southwest Area Office, and in June 1995, became Deputy Administrator.

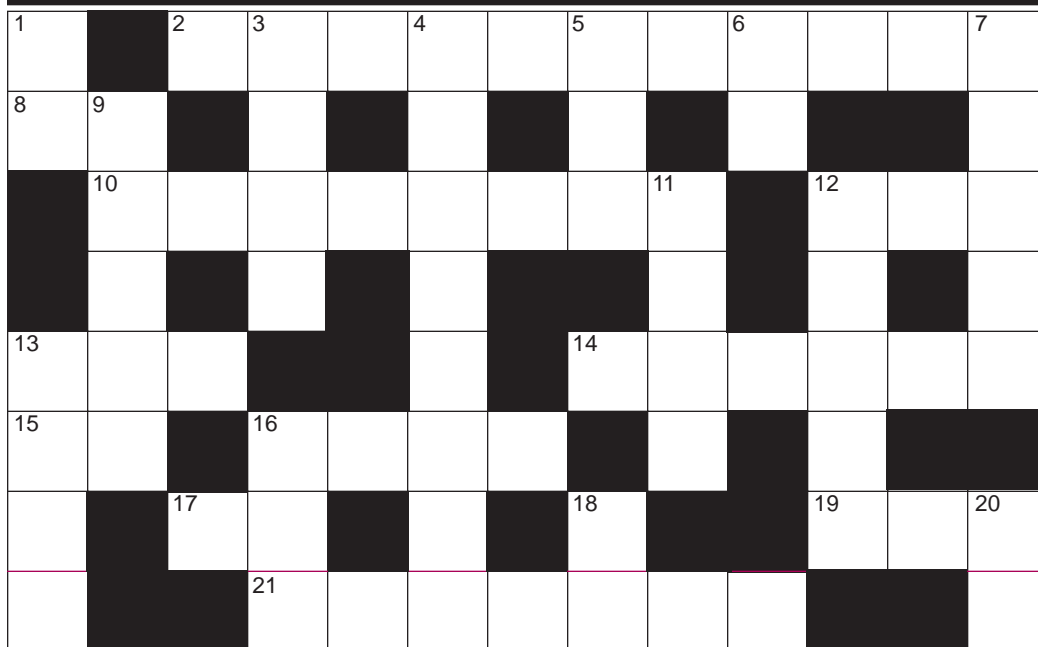
Throughout his life, Richard kept his attachment to the land, owning a grain and livestock operation in Texas since 1965. With his wife Judy he plans to return to Texas, where his three children still reside, and farm full time in his retirement.

Wherever his work has taken him, Richard has impressed colleagues not only with his competence but also his unfailing courtesy and good nature. A true gentleman, he will be greatly missed. We wish him all the best as he begins his new life.



Bidding Richard Newman (left) farewell at his December 15<sup>th</sup> retirement party are Secretary Glickman; Representative Charles Stenholm, D-Texas; retired Deputy Under Secretary Dallas Smith; and Administrator Kelly.

*Happy New Year!*

**JANUARY FSA CROSSWORD****DOWN**

1. This state grows the second most sunflowers in the U.S.
3. Inner egg
4. With 14 Across, strip of vegetation planted beside a waterway to absorb chemical runoff
5. Seed vessel
6. This state grows the most sunflowers in the U.S.
7. American consumption of this additive increased 27% from 1982 to 1996
9. Western movie hero's first name
11. Vegetable \_\_\_\_\_
12. You can put your gleaned vegetables in a \_\_\_\_\_ Cinch Sack
13. Land measurement
16. A fruit tree pollinator
18. This FSA state office is located in Lincoln
20. Secretary Glickman is from this state

**ACROSS**

2. This process of growing plants in water increases off-season produce production
8. FSA headquarter's locale
10. Frog havens
12. \_\_\_\_ heaven
13. \_\_\_\_ farm
14. See 4 Down
15. This FSA state office is located in Windsor
16. This soft, white cheese is named for the French town where it originated
17. This state grows nearly half of the U.S. peanut crop each year
19. Wild ox
21. Cross a tangerine with a grapefruit and this is what you get

**Answers to December's Puzzle**

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D	R	O	U	G	H	T		M		L		E
S			T				G	R	A	P	E	S

**CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

Date	Location	Event
January 6-9	Great Falls, Mont.	Administrator Kelly to attend Rocky Mountain College's January Thaw Farm and Ranch Conference
January 8-10	Baton Rouge, La.	Parks Shackelford, Associate Administrator, to attend Honey Producers Meeting
January 12	Tulsa, Okla.	Carolyn Cooksie, Deputy Administrator for Farm Loan Programs, to attend Cherokee Nation Meeting
January 13-14	Rio Rancho, N.M.	FSA/NRCS Joint EQIP Training — West Region
January 14-15	Savannah, Ga.	Administrator Kelly to attend the NASCOE Convention
January 19		Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 25-26	Fort Worth, Texas	FSA/NRCS Joint EQIP Training — Southcentral and Southeast Regions
February 3-4	Beltsville, Md.	FSA/NRCS Joint EQIP Training — East Region
To be announced	Chicago, Ill.	FSA/NRCS Joint EQIP Training — Midwest and Northern Plain Regions

*Note: The above is subject to change.*